

under Japanese auspices. It is understood that China intends to establish a national weather service, with headquarters at Peking, but no details of this plan are yet known.

P. C. D.

TO OBSERVERS OF METEORS.

Shooting stars, meteors, bolides, and aerolites are but different names for large and small bits of matter that enter the earth's atmosphere and are frequently burned up in it, but occasionally they pass through it, going onward in space, while at other times they burst in pieces and fall to the earth. The largest aerolite known is the great mass of iron weighing 36 or 37 tons that was brought from Greenland to New York City by Peary, and is now deposited at the entrance to the American Museum of Natural History in that city. Observation of these bodies has some interest to astronomers, but an especial interest to meteorologists. The combination of several accurate observations of positions as seen from as many different stations enables an expert to calculate the precise path of the aerolite through the atmosphere. From this we determine at once the altitude above the earth's surface at which there is sufficient air to heat the meteor to visibility. We can also calculate the resistance of the

atmosphere at that elevation whence there results some knowledge of its density. There are numerous other important questions to be answered, and such observations may give us a clue as to the condition of the highest portion of our atmosphere. Doubtless the time will come when observations of bright shooting stars will be expected of every meteorological observer, but at present they are recorded by the few enthusiasts devoted to research in untrodden fields.

We are therefore pleased to know that Prof. Charles P. Olivier, of Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Ga., has taken up this class of work, in which Prof. H. A. Newton of Yale College won such distinction and aroused both astronomers and meteorologists to realize their great importance. Prof. Olivier has in fact organized "The American Meteor Society," "having become convinced that the time had come for further cooperation." Within a few months 15 faithful observers were enrolled, and over 1,400 meteors reported from California, Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia. He desires to extend a hearty invitation to all who are interested in this subject, either because of its astronomical or its meteorological importance, and we hope that many will respond. Those whose business takes them out of doors during the nighttime can be especially useful.

C. A.